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SUBJECT: TFH01: HONDURAN COUP: POLITICAL WRAP-UP 07/21/09

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 619

[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 608 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)C. TEGUCIGALPA 602

[1](#)D. TEGUCIGALPA 599

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: This is another in a series of daily round-ups of political news in the aftermath of the June 28 forcible removal and exile of President Manuel Zelaya from Honduras. End Summary.

Micheletti Remains Firm in his Public Stance

[1](#)2. (U) On July 20 defacto regime president Micheletti stated publicly that Zelaya cannot come back as president; he can only return to Honduras to face criminal charges. Micheletti's cabinet met yesterday at the Presidential Palace with members of the business community and civil society who support the de facto regime. Micheletti was quoted as saying, "my position is unchangeable, we have received pressure from all sides but we will not accept Zelaya's return under any circumstances."

[1](#)3. (U) Micheletti claims he still supports the dialogue in Costa Rica, and his government is using these 72 hours to look for a positive solution to the political crisis that does not involve the return of Zelaya to the presidency. However, Embassy outreach to political, business, church and civil society leaders is beginning to have an impact in changing views in favor of supporting the Arias mediation. Micheletti continues to affirm that he will step down as President on January 27, 2010 after a new President is elected on November 29.

Honduras Reaction to Suspended AID

[1](#)4. (U) Local Press reported that The Secretary had called Micheletti explaining the consequences a failed negotiation could have on U.S. assistance to Honduras. Micheletti in response requested that the Secretary send people to Honduras to truly evaluate the situation in Honduras and especially how the human rights situation is.

[1](#)5. (U) The European Union announced yesterday that they were freezing 65.5 million Euros (USD 91.7 million) of aid to Honduras. The EU countries have also recalled its ambassadors and have reduced contact with the de facto government. Unfortunately, the EU Mission continues to meet

with Micheletti regime officials up to the level of Vice Minister.

De Facto Government has Business Community Support

16. (U) The president of The Honduran Private Enterprise Counsel (COHEP), Amilcar Bulnes, said publicly that his organization supports the de facto government and will not accept Zelaya's return to presidency. Bulnes believes that the other countries and governments will slowly realize that they have made a mistake in prematurely condemning Honduras. Bulnes stated that business has returned to normal in Honduras, with the exception of the tourism sector which has been influenced the most by the political crisis.

17. (U) The president of the National Federation of Honduran Agriculture (FENAGH), Santiago Ruiz, stated publicly that "Honduras is willing to put up with whatever extortion that comes from outside." Ruiz stated that Honduras remains united against internal and external threats.

18. (U) The president of the National Industrial Association (ANDI), Adolfo Facusse, stated publicly yesterday that if international pressure results in a lack of resources for Honduras the Honduran business community will step in to help. Facusse suggested to the local press increased taxes for the rich and that businesses maintain stable prices. (Note: In a private meeting with the Ambassador on July 20, Facusse told the Ambassador that he would support a

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negotiated agreement under the Arias mediation. However, he stressed that the key was to incorporate strong monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure full compliance by Zelaya. End Note)

Poor who Support Michelletti

19. (U) EconOff visited with approximately 15 residents of Colonia Guaymuras, an impoverished community on the outskirts of Tegucigalpa. Residents, who are very poor and largely uneducated, were eager to share their political beliefs and are very concerned about the political crisis in Honduras. They strongly support the de facto government and are very fearful of Zelaya's return. They believe that Zelaya was stealing from the poor and would rather go without international support for six months than see Zelaya return. They fear violence and how poor communities like theirs will be affected due to the political crisis.

"Pepe" Lobo Speaks Out

110. (U) Local press reported that presidential candidate for the National Party, Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo Sosa, stated yesterday that unfortunately there is no desire for dialogue among Hondurans and he does not believe that there will be a solution within the 72 hours Arias gave both sides. He asked Venezuela and the United States to let Honduras resolve the crisis alone and is concerned that Honduras is being threatened by its Northern and the Southern neighbors.

Honduras gives Venezuela 72 Hours to Leave

111. (U) Deputy Foreign Minister Marta Lorena Alvarado declared on CNN en Espanol that the Venezuelan ambassador to Honduras and embassy personnel have 72 hours to leave Honduras. She cited threats of "use of force" and disrespect of Honduran

sovereignty as the reasons behind the expulsion. The Honduran ambassador and embassy team in Caracas will depart Venezuela in the same 72 hour time-frame.

Disappearances and Media Censorship Declarations

¶12. (U) CNN en Espanol broadcasted a Honduran congressional and civil society delegation briefing at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The delegation denounced the Micheletti de facto government for suppressing media outlets in the country that express a dissenting voice. Radio Globo, Radio Progreso, and Channel 36 were named among those censored. The team also made claims that several pro-Zelaya protesters have disappeared around the country following attendance at rallies and that intimidation tactics continue against human rights activists throughout Honduras. The group called on the Micheletti de facto regime to reconsider their positions and accept the agreement proposed by President Arias to re-establish democracy in Honduras and end the international isolation that has resulted from the removal of Zelaya.

Zelaya Supporters will Resume Strikes Thursday

¶13. (U) Zelaya supporters have announced publicly that they will begin strikes and roadblocks Thursday and that Zelaya will return on Friday.

¶14. (U) Teachers returned to classes Monday but reportedly plan to strike again Thursday and Friday in support of Zelaya. "El Herald" reported that teachers are instructing minors to join the resistance against the new government.
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